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Approved For Release 2006/09/26 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001900010096-2

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20 December 1973

*Display*  
*for file 1-2*  
*Days 7 Interdiction*  
*NBTSB*  
*winning ABF*  
*S-5795*

SUBJECT: Major Cambodian Lines of Communication

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1. Of the major transportation routes which Cambodia uses to deliver military and civilian supplies to Phnom Penh -- Route 1 (Saigon-Phnom Penh), Route 4 (Kompong Som-Phnom Penh), Route 5 (Battambang-Phnom Penh), Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport, and the Mekong River -- only the Mekong and Pochentong Airport are currently open. Route 1 has been closed since late 1972, Route 4 since 10 November 1973 and Route 5 since 6 September of this year. Despite these interdictions, the Government of the Khmer Republic (GKR) is not critically short of essential military and civilian supplies, since the Mekong River corridor is the major supply route for Cambodia. Current military and civilian stocks of rice are sufficient for more than two weeks' consumption, while most civilian petroleum supplies are adequate for at least three weeks -- and FANK has POL stocks in excess of one month's supply. FANK's ammunition stocks for most categories range from three to four weeks.

2. The relative importance of the Mekong is demonstrated by the commodities which are delivered by this route. All of the ammunition and some military equipment destined for FANK is shipped up the Mekong. In addition, almost all foodstuffs and petroleum -- a total on the order of 400,000 tons for 1973 -- have been convoyed into Phnom Penh. Pochentong Airport, on the other hand, is an important but not critical supply funnel for the GKR. Most deliveries of military equipment are made by air and in the past the airport has been used for emergency deliveries. It should be noted, however, that if the Mekong were closed, Pochentong alone could not handle the quantities necessary to keep the GKR and its forces supplied.

3. The surface transportation routes vary in importance. Route 1, because of its extended interdiction, is not a viable supply corridor. Nonetheless, tactical control of the route by FANK between Phnom Penh and Neak Long is important as it hinders Khmer Communist interdiction efforts along the Mekong. The opening of Route 4 would

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permit rice and petroleum to be offloaded at the port of Kompong Som and delivery by truck to Phnom Penh, but shipment costs would be higher and vehicle cargo capacity far lower than the Mekong route. Route 5's principal function is to allow the delivery of rice from Battambang to Phnom Penh. The continued closure of this route would deny most (some could be airlifted) of the 55,000-60,000 tons of supplies of rice in Battambang that will be available for the capital after the 1973/74 harvest is completed early next year. This deficit, should FANK not reopen Route 5, will be made up by PL 480 deliveries via the Mekong.

4. Over the next few months the Mekong probably will remain the almost exclusive supply route for the GKR, since the Khmer Communists currently are making a concerted effort to maintain their interdiction of key road routes as part of their 1973/74 dry season strategy. As shown in Table 1 the days of interdiction of major routes has gone up appreciably in 1973. This increased denial of land routes has resulted in a considerable increase in 1973 in the number of convoys plying the Mekong as compared to 1972 (see Table 2).

OER/S/LM

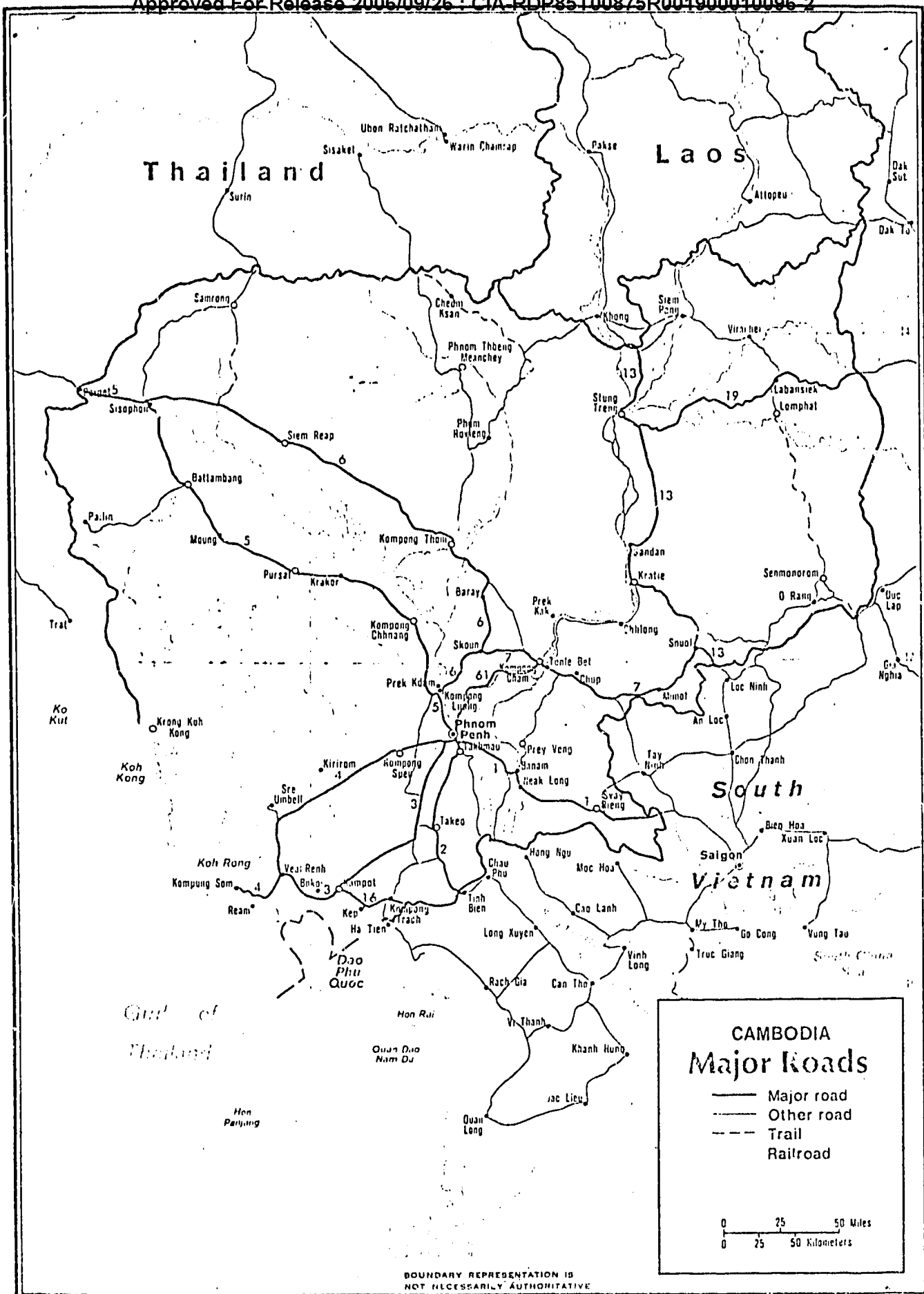


Table 1  
Interdiction of Major Land Routes

	Routes			Days
	1	4	5	
1972 Total	<u>258</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>123</u>	
1st qtr	--	9	4	
2nd qtr	74	21	12	
3rd qtr	92	--	55	
4th qtr	92	37	52	
1973 Total	<u>354</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>189</u>	
1st qtr	90	11	4	
2nd qtr	91	26	70	
3rd qtr	92	33	34	
Oct	31	15	31	
Nov	30	20	30	
1-20 Dec	20	20	20	

Table 2

## Summary of Mekong Convoys (north and southbound)

	Number	Attacks by Fire
1972 Total	<u>38</u>	<u>35</u>
1st qtr	7	7
2nd qtr	4	4
3rd qtr	6	6
4th qtr	21	18
1973 Total	<u>101</u>	<u>84</u>
1st qtr	17	11
2nd qtr	20	39
3rd qtr	39	24
Oct	13	2
Nov	9	5
1-20 Dec	3	4

*Broken Down*

*North Bound*  
*South Bound*